The Covenant Nations

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 5, 2009

INSIDE...

GOD'S GREAT PLAN *Page 6*

THE CONTINUING KINGDOM OF GOD UPON EARTH *Page 8*

▲ The butterfly has long been a Christian symbol of resurrection, for it disappears into a cocoon and appears dead, but emerges later far more beautiful and powerful than before.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" I *Corinthians* 15:52.

◄ COVER PICTURE:The sunrise over the ocean is a beautiful sight which may remind us of the dawn of all things when our Creator God began His work.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" *Genesis* 1:1

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Michael A Clark
Ernest S Gage
David J Aimer
Philippa M Clark
Kathleen D Gage

HEAD OFFICE

The British-Israel-World Federation
121 Low Etherley
Bishop Auckland DL14 0HA
United Kingdom
Telephone: 01388 834 395
Fax: 01388 835 957
E-mail: admin@britishisrael.co.uk
Web: www.britishisrael.co.uk

The Covenant Publishing Co Ltd
121 Low Etherley
Bishop Auckland DL14 0HA
United Kingdom
Telephone: 01388 835 753
E-mail: admin@covpub.co.uk
Web: www.covpub.co.uk

OVERSEAS OFFICES

Australia

BIWF in NSW Ltd, PO Box 76, Ungarie, NSW, 2669
E-mail: britis1@bigpond.com

BIWF (Queensland) Inc., 41 Kirikee Street, Ferny Grove, Queensland, 4055
Telephone: +61 (0) 3851 2697
E-mail: micdor@pb.ozemail.com.au

BIWF (Victoria) Inc., PO Box 596, Camberwell, Victoria, 3124
Telephone: +61 (0) 39882 4256
+61 (0) 39882 8643

New Zealand

BIWF (NZ) Auckland Inc., PO Box 56-142, Dominion Road, Mout Eden, Auckland, 1446
Telephone: (09) 630 0982

Canada

BIWF (Canada) Inc, 313 Sherbourne Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 2S3
Telephone: (416) 921 5996
E-mail: british-israel@bellnet.ca
Web: www.british-israel-world-fed.ca

Canadian British-Israel Association
500 Tecumseh Rd. E. Box 28047 Windsor, Ontario N8X 5E4
Telephone: 1-800-919-8819
E-mail: staff@israelite.ca
Web: www.israelite.ca

The Netherlands

Bond Netherlands Israel
Postbus 30009, 1303 AA Almere
Telephone: 036 5296956

South Africa

South African Office - Mrs A Fromburg
PO Box 2565, Port Alfred, 6170
Telephone: +27 (0) 46 6243342

USA

BIWF-USA, (also The Covenant Publishing Company of North America) 405 West Searcy Street, Heber Springs,
Arkansas, 72543, USA
Telephone: 501 362 5299
Fax: 501 362 5312
E-mail: biwfusa@sbcglobal.net / covpubna@sbcglobal.net
Web: www.biwf-usa.com

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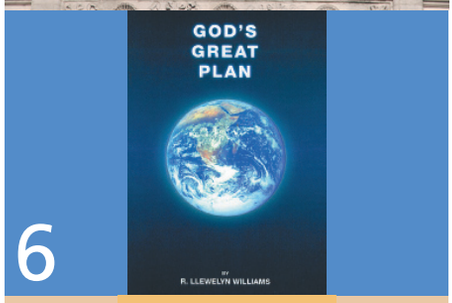

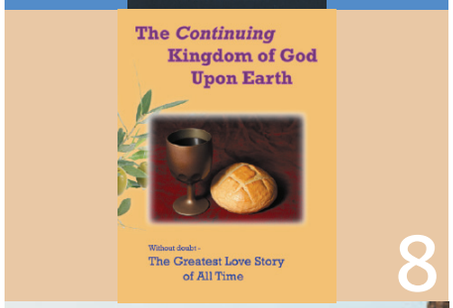

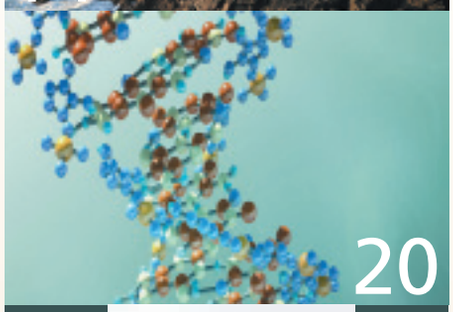

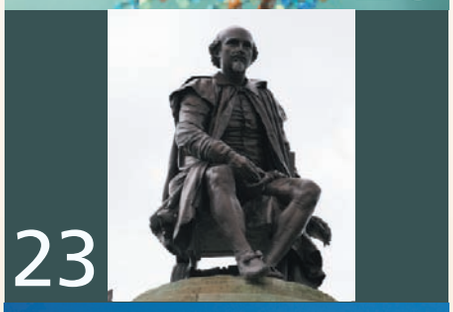

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles are generally well-researched and considered. However, they do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

Join us in the Great Cause to Wake Up God's Covenant Nations!

THE WORLD in the 21st century should be a better place to live in than that of the previous century. Amid all the unspeakable chaos it clearly is not and the slide to disaster accelerates. The reason for this is that the key to civilization ordered by Almighty God is being substituted for a pagan globalization, dominated by materialism, causing God's Covenant Nations to be merged with Mammon and a hierarchy of evil.

Only with an understanding of the Great Plan and Purpose for the company of great Christian nations, which emerged to lead the world in civilization over the past 500 years, can we hope to prevent destruction.

In *The Covenant Nations* our mission is to demonstrate that the spread of the Christian message is the Divinely appointed task of the Britannic peoples throughout the world; those today who are descended from God's Servant people, Jacob-Israel, whose covenant responsibility has ever been the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. While He has endowed them with authority and power to discharge this heavy duty, it can only be executed if, like the patriarch Abraham, they believe God and obey Him, leaning on the righteousness of Christ.

This is a message of great hope for all who will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to them what God purposed to remain hidden as the treasure in the field of the world, until this appointed Age-end period of history.

As events unfold we will continue to develop the scriptural theme of a dedicated people in the light of current affairs as proclaimed in prophetic vision by our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles He commissioned. The dedicated family and Company of Nations are soon to emerge again and rise up, to the astonishment of those who seek a One-World Order of man.

This message of overruling Providence in history is of supreme importance at this time of the end of the Age – a tempestuous period of which our Lord warned in His final address to His disciples. He foretold that His arch-enemy, Satan, would be increasingly active in a final endeavour to prevent the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The world today reflects the tragedy which he said would herald the final manifestation of His Kingdom and His Return in power and glory to take-up the Throne of David, established on earth as an everlasting throne of righteousness.

We invite you to use *The Covenant Nations* as a witness to all who will receive this message. Please help us to make the maximum contribution to the spread of His Age-end counsel among our Christian Israel peoples – as a first crucial step towards world peace!

The Lion of Judah and the Unicorn of Joseph. As seen on Customs House in Dublin, Ireland.

The Birthright of the West

When we look at the world today we see ever-increasing chaos among the nations. Violence and disruption to ordered and civilized life is increasing seemingly without there being any real hope of restraint. A century and more ago in the days of the British Empire most Westerners felt tremendous pride and confidence in their civilization. They knew what it stood for and they believed in it. Today that sense has gone.

A controversial yet compelling book with the provocative title of *Suicide of the West*, published in 2006, sought to identify six key pillars of Western civilization: Christianity, optimism, science, economic growth, liberalism and individualism. The authors set out how these ideas have suffered a century of sustained attack from within and no longer inspire or unite the West, making a drift towards collective suicide appear inevitable.

Noting that all might not be as bleak as it seems, the book suggested that a careful examination of the six factors shows that they have great resilience. In its opening chapter 'The Identity of the West,' it says that "The most fascinating, weighty and difficult issue facing every Westerner today is not one of economic survival but of *identity*. 'Who am I?'" In early 2009 economic survival has risen dramatically up the scale, but identity is coming to be more relevant as the fashionable but flaky concepts of the one world village culture of past years are seen to be destabilising the West.

At his inaugural address, President Barack Obama spoke of the United States being at war against a far-reaching network of hatred and violence and of *"***our collective failure to make hard choices and to prepare the nation for a new age.***"* He went on to say of America, *"***We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit, to choose our better history, to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation***."* What new age should we prepare for as a company of covenant nations?

It was the prophet Amos who declared; "*Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*." (*Amos* 4:12). It is the *nation* and "company of nations" constituting the Kingdom of God upon Earth that need to prepare to meet their Jehovah God. The kingdom is of course made up of individuals, but Almighty God holds His people Israel to a collective responsibility as a **birthright** people destined to lead the nations in peace. They are to cleanse themselves not only individually, but in their nation state 'sanctuary' at law and in economic and moral standing. What a great loss it is that the Gospel of the Kingdom which the churches preach completely ignores the unfolding birthright heritage of the covenant people.

The Great Seal of the U.S.A

This birthright shapes our unique history. Indeed it is the age-long plan of the *continuing* Kingdom of God upon Earth that is being prepared through His covenant people. They are found in the English-speaking and kindred peoples who embody the great bulk of the descendants of God's servant people Israel. The division of ancient Israel into two kingdoms was in the long term plan of God that they might *expand and grow* over thousands of years into the great company of present-day Western nations.

It is clearly defined in I *Chronicles* 5:12, that "*the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright*." There was no tribe of Joseph, but the great national blessings were to be fulfilled through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, with the birthright going to Ephraim the younger son as Jacob-Israel crossed his arms in his blessing of Joseph's two sons.

While the Church puts all its emphasis upon the genealogy from the House of Judah coming down to Jesus the "chief ruler" and coming King of kings, it ignores the basic fact that one cannot have a king without a kingdom and a throne. In the fulfilled outworking of the birthright covenant promises through Joseph's descendants, there is a power of witness to God's Great Plan.

GOD'S GREAT PLAN

All material objects we see around us, whether manufactured by machine or hand made, first existed as a plan on paper. This gave details of size, shape and the materials needed to create the object as envisaged by the designer. But before that planning stage the object existed only in the mind of its creator, a spiritual form having no material or visible evidence of its existence. At that stage it was merely a thought requiring energy to convert it into actual substance having dimensions and, perhaps, mobility. It would need to conform to certain basic laws to enable it to serve its intended purpose in an environment which had light, heat, energy and chemical elements in its makeup.

In this world of ours we learn of these laws of nature, as they are called, and whatever man builds or manufactures he is bound by them, for they cannot be ignored without inevitable consequences. They are part of the environment in which we live and which supports life as we know it.

The existence of this planet Earth, with all the life forms on it and in it, and the evidence of law which controls it and sustains it, presupposes its earlier existence as a thought and a plan in the mind of a creator. The sheer intricacy, complexity and interdependency of plant, animal and human life cannot be adequately explained as the result of mere accident or chance. The evidence of forethought, planning and design is so overwhelming as to make nonsense of such an explanation.

Book available at Covenant Publishing.

That such a creator exists, one who cares deeply about his creation, is clearly evident in the books of the Bible. The writers of these books give collective testimony which reveals the nature, power and purposes of God, the creator and father of us all. They give details of the history of peoples, empires and dynasties covering many centuries of time. Uniquely many of them give prophetic visions of, to them, future world events which, in retrospect, we can see as having come to pass in recent history. Their testimony is confirmed by extant records and archaeological evidence which has been discovered in our modern era.

No other book tells us of a creator God who designed and planned His creation; Who created our Earth with its great diversity of plant and animal life; Who formed man of the same earthly elements contained in the ground, a living being at one with the creator and to live in harmony with Him enjoying a full and purposeful life. Such a life would, of necessity, conform to the Great Designer's rules but this should have presented no problem to that first man and woman of whom the Bible speaks. They were not puppets to be manipulated at the whim of their maker. They were, rather, made in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis* 1:26) with the ability to respond to His love and to reason intellectually, making decisions in accordance with the laws of their maker.

The gospel writer, John, tells us that God is a spirit and has to be worshipped "in spirit and in truth" (*John* 4:24). We, too, have a spiritual aspect to our being which, when in tune with God's spirit, should motivate our thinking and behaviour in compliance with the will of God. But St Paul informs us that in this earthly life we are confronted by "spiritual wickedness in high places" (*Ephesians* 6:12). This evil and counterfeit spirit world is unseen but very real as mankind has experienced in all ages. Adam and Eve were confronted by it and were not sufficiently faithful and strong-willed to withstand it. Sadly we have inherited this weakness, hence the need for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By giving way to Satan's evil influence they forfeited their special relationship with God.

We may not understand the full extent of the damage that was done to that relationship for, as we read in God's word, Job, faithfully praising the work of his maker, declares "which doeth great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number" (*Job* 9:10). We have to accept in faith that it was a serious matter and required the forfeiture of man's life in atonement for his rebellion. However, in the love and providence of God, full and final atonement was promised in the sacrifice of the perfect life of the Son of God Who, at the propitious time, would come into the world. He was and is the only Saviour of mankind and Redeemer of God's kingdom and of His creation. Our finite minds cannot grasp that which is infinite; only faith and trust in the Lord can keep us on the road to that eternal life which is promised to all who believe in Him.

The process of regeneration and reconciliation was always in God's plans for He was not taken unawares by man's rebellion. He therefore chose a particular people who were to become His kingdom on earth, to demonstrate to all other communities and nations the blessings to be enjoyed worldwide by obedience to His Divine law and constitution.

The first patriarchs of this kingdom were promised the continuity of the kingdom throughout all ages; that it would in time become a nation and a company of nations under the everlasting throne of David, the first king of Israel of the line of Judah. Jesus of Nazareth, as the genealogy given by St Matthew records, was, in human terms, a descendant of that line and thus is the legitimate heir to that earthly throne. Yet He was 'Immanuel, God with us,' the wonderful fulfilment of God's early promise to provide the only means of atonement to counter man's rebellion, summed up in that one little word 'sin.'

The chequered history of God's kingdom, with its unfaithfulness to God, its division, captivities and final exile from the Promised Land culminated in its regathering in the isles of Great Britain and its development into the company of nations overseas in accordance with the promises of God. The occupant of the British throne is a direct descendant of King David, traceable within the royal line which came through the Irish, Scottish and English royal dynasties.

The Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar brought to a close the remaining occupation of the Promised Land by the people of Israel. The last king of the Davidic line, Zedekiah, was taken captive and following the murder of his sons he too was put to death. The link between him and the Irish throne, occupied at the time by a descendant of Judah's son Zarah, was made through his elder daughter who escaped the Babylonian captivity, arrived by ship in southern Ireland and married the Irish king who was called Eochaidh.

But God's great plan does not end just in the establishment of His kingdom here in the British Commonwealth of nations. Nor does it end with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take His rightful place on the throne of His earthly forefather David. Following His return in power and majesty there will come an end to sin, suffering and, eventually, death itself. All these vicissitudes of this earthly life are to become things of the past, as will the influence of the Evil One whose power will finally be destroyed. His plan, indeed, takes us beyond the present and even the future but on into eternity. This wonderful prospect is the theme of those words in Isaiah's prophecy "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (*Isaiah* 9:7).

Surely, with all the evidence of God's sovereignty and power, we have every reason to be supremely confident in these difficult times, for they are, after all, just the birth pains of the wonderful new age to come.

ALFRED BROWN

THE BRITISH-ISRAEL-WORLD FEDERATION

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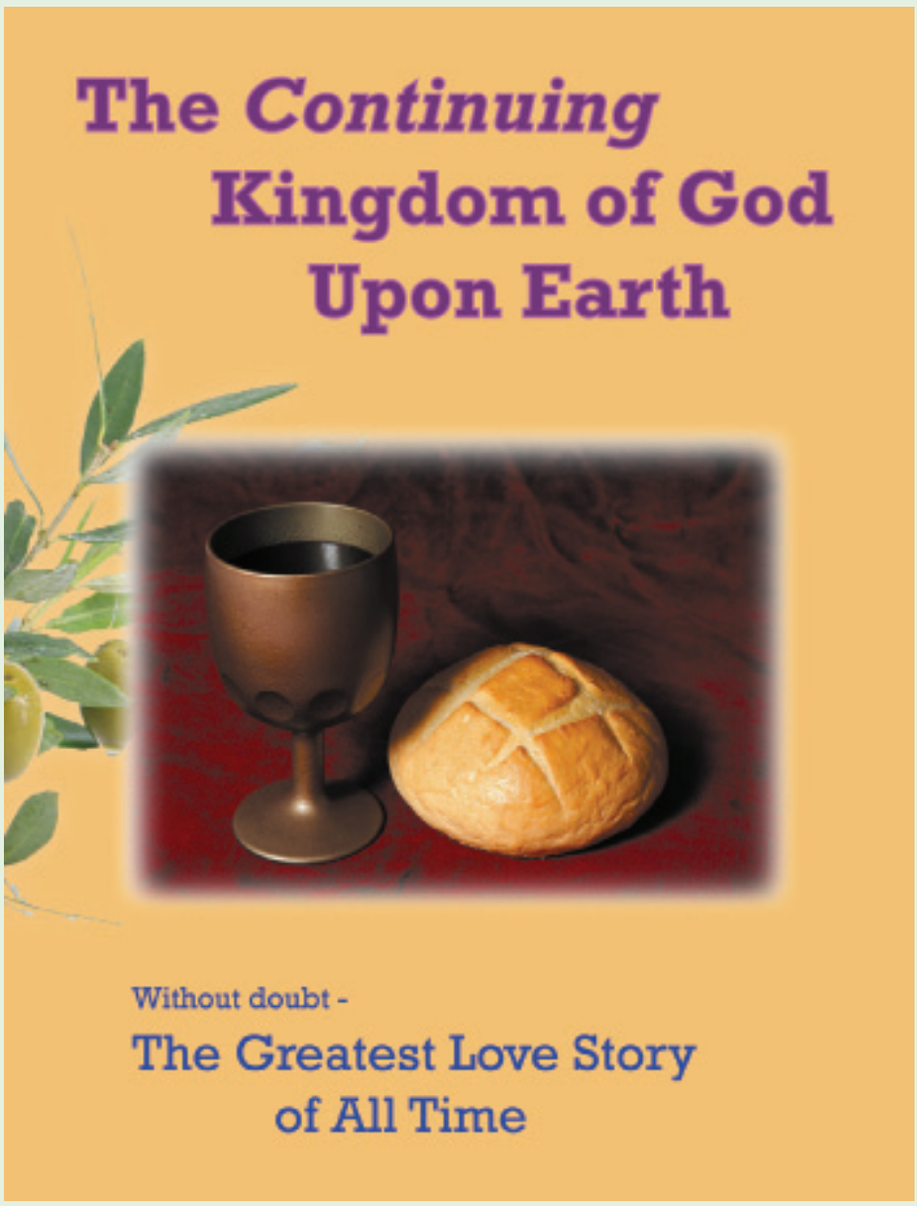
THE *CONTINUING* KINGDOM OF GOD UPON EARTH

Without doubt - the Greatest Love Story of All Time

This is the first part of a new booklet which is now available as free literature from BIWF*



Among the passages of Scripture which are carefully avoided by those who like to think of the Kingdom of God as a purely spiritual one or as the Christian Church, is the question asked of our Lord by His disciples just before His ascension: "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" (*Acts* 1:6).

These men had been with Jesus almost from the beginning of His ministry. They knew that this ministry was concerned with the kingdom of God, for He had begun it with this proclamation: "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel*" (*Mark* 1:15). Further, they knew the parables in which He had explained the nature of the kingdom to them and in the days since His resurrection they had spent many hours with Him discussing "*the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*" (*Acts* 1:3).

It is certain, therefore, that the disciples were well aware of the nature of the kingdom of God. It is also obvious from the wording of their question "*wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel*?" that they were not referring to a new spiritual kingdom, or even to the still future Christian Church; but rather to something which had been, and was again to be, very closely related to the Israel nation and kingdom.

The Kingdom taken from the Jews

What then is this kingdom of God and what did the disciples mean when they spoke of restoring, or reconstructing, it again and specifically to Israel? In the Divine plan, what we are talking about is a unique Kingdom – a special listed building! Meaning it could not be demolished or changed out of all recognition, because of it being a heritage building, or nation, that would only increase and grow to vast importance in the world.

In seeking to answer these questions and prophetic aspects, let us first turn to a statement which our Lord Himself had made to the leaders of Jewry just a short time before. He had come to them with the evidence of His identity, offering to lead the kingdom in righteousness. Yet they refused to meet the conditions and eventually rejected Him, with the result that He said to them: "*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a* ***nation*** *bringing forth the fruits thereof*" (*Matthew* 21:43).

So here again we see that the kingdom of God is to be intimately associated with a nation and, in view of the disciples' question, there can be no doubt that the nation to which the kingdom is to be transferred, will be evidenced as bearing the fruits of Israel's mission and identity. This, however, requires a word or two of explanation because so many people have the mistaken idea that the Jews and Israel are one and the same thing. Yet the historical fact is that nearly a thousand years before Christ, the twelve tribes of the Israel kingdom had been split into two separate and distinct kingdoms: the ten tribes became the House or Kingdom of Israel and the two tribes became the House or Kingdom of Judah.

The Kingdom moved to an Appointed Place

All of the House of Israel and most of the House of Judah, after being deported to Assyria, had long since migrated or been driven into distant lands from where they were even then being re-gathered into a new home as foretold in II *Samuel* 7:10: "*Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more*." Millions of Israelites had moved into Europe.

This was certainly known to our Lord and, from His discussions with them, it must also have been known to the disciples. Consequently, knowing that the kingdom, which the Jews had rejected, was to be given to Israel and knowing too that the Lord was soon to leave them, they came to Him with, what was to them, the all-important question: "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel*?"or in other words, you have told us that you are going away; does that mean that you are going as you said to "*the lost sheep of the House of Israel*" (*Matthew* 10:6; 15:24) to set up the kingdom there? It is important to note that the Lord's reference to the *sheep* of the House of Israel was *before* the Christian Church came into being. Israel was still the Lord's sheep and He would go to those who were 'lost' as the Shepherd of Israel (*John* 10:16).

There was here no concern about the nature of the kingdom, which they knew, or with the fact that it was to be set up in Israel's new appointed place instead of Jewry; but rather with the time of this event. Was Jesus going to the lost sheep of the House of Israel to set up the kingdom immediately or later? Nevertheless, their use of the words "*restore again ... to Israel*" gives us a definite clue as to the nature of the kingdom of God, for to be something which could be reconstructed and restored again to Israel, it had to be something which Israel had had at some time in the past. The kingdom of God, therefore, must have existed in Israel of old and so, if we would know its nature and form that it would take in the future, we must seek it in the history of the Israel people. This history is recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible, which contains many covenant promises to Israel as a nation and kingdom in continuity in future millennia.

The Purpose of the Kingdom

Turning then to the history book of Israel, the Bible, set in the old and new covenants, or testaments, we find there the revelation of a great purpose which God is working out in human history and world affairs. The ultimate objective of this purpose is the restoration of mankind's life and world to the perfection of the original Creation. Its more immediate objective, however, is the bringing into being of a covenant people and way of life wherein God's Will is the law governing all human conduct, whether as individuals or in government. Of necessity such a purpose requires human co-operation on a corporate basis for, if God's Law is to be obeyed, a people will have to obey it and, if His law is to be applied and administered, this people will have to apply and administer it, that being a covenant nation 'ruled by God' or 'ruling with God' – which is the meaning of the name 'Is-ra-el.'

So, very early in biblical history we find it recorded that God brought into being the Israel people and formed them into a nation of which He was both King and Lawmaker. He revealed His Will to them in a code of Divine Law applying to every

"For thy Maker is thine husband"
Isaiah 54:5

phase of human life and conduct – religious, political, social and economic. God actually took Israel to wife as His national Bride and laid on them the great and holy responsibility of administering His Will in a covenant form of government as the law in the conduct of human affairs – an example nation to the whole world.

Here then is the kingdom of God as it existed in Israel of old. It was also a social order in which all human conduct and relations were governed by God's Will as expressed in His Commandments and Statutes. It was the direct rule and government of the Israel people and nation by the God of all creation, with peace, prosperity, health and happiness for all as the result of obedience to His Divine Law.

The Kingdom Divided to Expand

Unfortunately, the covenant nation of Israel proved unfaithful to this great trust. As generation followed generation, God's law was gradually forgotten and eventually, as a result of continuous disobedience, the kingdom ceased to function and the righteousness which it had provided became but a memory. This failure to continue in obedience to God's Will made it impossible for Him to shield them from the attacks of their enemies, with the result that the nation was broken up and sent into a period of exile and correction lasting 2,520 (7 x 360) years, or "Seven Times" (*Leviticus* 26:18; also vs 21 & 24).

In the long term this process of break-up, deportation and eventual resurrection from 'death,' like the prefiguration of Joseph being sent into Egypt, was to prove part of the great overruling purpose of God for the descendants of the sons of Jacob-Israel recorded at Jacob's dying blessing in *Genesis* 49. Particularly was this so in respect of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were to become leading tribes and in the far future, great nations (*Genesis* 48:13-19), there being no tribe of Joseph as such.

First, Israel broke into two separate and distinct kingdoms after the death of King Solomon. Jeroboam and the ten tribes broke away from the two tribes at Jerusalem to form their own nation with a capital at Samaria, often referred to as Ephraim as well as the House of Israel. Significantly, the House of Judah, under Rehoboam, was forbidden by the Lord from starting a civil war among the tribes as God indicated that "*this thing is from me*" (I *Kings* 12:24). How could this be a positive event, except that a greater process was being initiated? The answer clearly lay in God's foreknowledge. Despite the division and upheaval taking place in the unity of the kingdom and through the deportation, migration and eventual expansion, all of which God knew would happen, a far greater kingdom was under construction than could ever be imagined.

The Kingdom taken into Captivity

Then, between 732 and 700 BC, both Israel and Judah were attacked and conquered by enemies who deported the vast majority of the people from the two kingdoms as captives to Assyria. Within fifty years of these dates a people whom the Assyrians called Gimira appeared for the first time in history in both Media and northern Mesopotamia; they were in fact Israelites. Having escaped from captivity, the vast bulk of the Israelite tribes were being re-gathered to a new appointed home in the Isles and coastlands of North-west Europe. Here, in this new home, they were to grow and develop into the "*nation and company of nations*" (*Genesis* 35:11) promised to Jacob, while awaiting the end of the "Seven Times" or 2,520 years period of exile and correction.

There was a *second* exodus – this time from Assyria – to a further promised land that was prepared and waiting in the 'isles

afar off.' The migration of the tribes is difficult to follow through the secular record because the time scale of events in the Old World has been misinterpreted. As the Israelites moved, in the main westward into Europe, taking names from the places where they settled as well as leaving their own names, records were kept. The Etruscans in northern Italy actually refer to two great outgoings in their records, the first being from Egypt and the second from Assyria. This great movement of peoples will only be revealed to secular history when the chronology of the Old World removes the 'ghost history' of some 650 years *that simply does not exist*! Then will true Israel, the national bride of Jehovah and the 'Sleeping Beauty,' frozen in time and history for almost seven centuries, awaken to the Coming King of kings.

A much smaller number from the House of Judah were taken to Babylonia. Later a remnant of Judah – less than 50,000 – returned from Babylon to Palestine, and it was their descendants, becoming known as Jews, who rejected our Lord thereby losing the kingdom. In our Lord's day the time which was fulfilled was the 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 years, which were to elapse between a certain event in connection with the city of Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah, as stated in *Daniel* 9:25. That time had run its course and just as it ended, Jesus the Christ, began His ministry with His proclamation of the good news of the kingdom. Thus the time was fulfilled; the Messiah had come and had Jewry been willing to accept Him the kingdom could have been restored at that time. However, the leaders of Jewry rejected the King and so the offer to restore the kingdom was withdrawn until, with the ending of Israel's 2,520-year exile period, it could be offered to her. That period too has now come to an end, and so once again the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

The Kingdom Redeemed through God's Love

In the prophecy of Hosea, the story of Israel as the divorced wife of her Jehovah God is played out in the personal life of the prophet. It is the greatest love story of all time as Israel is "allured" and gathered again, spoken to "comfortably" by the Lord and converted into a God-fearing nation once more. After "many days," or years, He betroths her once more and she becomes His wife again calling the Lord "Ishi," or my husband (*Hosea* 2:16). Under the Divine Law it is only possible for a wife to be married again after the death of her husband, thus in the death of Jesus upon the Cross, Jehovah, the husband of Israel died in order that He could take her again as His national Bride in the redeemed and continuing kingdom upon Earth. This event proved the deity of Christ as God would not die by proxy.

Hosea's prophecy is profound and a wonderful confirmation of God's faithfulness to His national Bride. Israel is not replaced by the Church as God's Bride for she is *still alive* and God would never commit bigamy by having two wives that are living. At every point the theological attempt to replace Israel with the Church in *Hosea* breaks down. Israel is not replaced, but *redeemed* and is, therefore *continuing,* and this in the full sense of a literal kingdom with a *covenant system* of government. This is the good news of the Gospel of the kingdom. It is said, even by fervent Protestants, that the Church is the greatest institution in the world (a statement that the Pope in Rome would agree with), when in fact it is the *Kingdom* that is the greatest established order to confirm the plan of God for the world.

After two "days," or two thousand years, a thousand years being as one day with the Lord (II *Peter* 3:8), beginning in the 14th and 15th centuries AD, Israel in the British Isles began to revive spiritually. Since then and "in the third day" (*Hosea* 6:1-2), or the third millennium since their captivities began, the Reformation (or re-formation), raised them up to become a great company of Christian nations, which 'People of the Book' took the Gospel of the kingdom to the whole world in the days of the British Empire – the only non-totalitarian empire the world has ever seen.

MICHAEL A CLARK

*BIWF, 121 Low Etherley, Bishop Auckland, DL14 0HA, United Kingdom

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THE FORGOTTEN BIRTHRIGHT

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:" *Genesis* 49: 22

Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh
Painted by A Gordon Thomas in 1925

In all the Christian theological studies concerning the Kingdom of God, there is one very serious omission and blind-spot, the consequences of which have created a stunted and lopsided understanding of the continuing Kingdom of God upon Earth.

It is difficult to understand why millions of very intelligent students of the Bible have failed to realize what is wrong with their accepted view of God's Great Plan that concentrates only upon the Messianic line of descent coming down from Judah. This is despite the clear Scriptural confirmation in I *Chronicles* 5:1-2 that while the "chief ruler," or the Messiah, would come from Judah, the literal birthright blessing would continue through Joseph.

The prophetic record of the vision of the way the birthright would pass to Joseph and his descendants through the generations is very direct. It is integral to and inseparable from the prophetic promise given by God to Jacob-Israel in *Genesis* chapter 48. Esau sold the birthright to Jacob who had valued it. No amount of spiritualization of the kingdom promises and covenants can avoid the fact that the birthright was literal and continued through Joseph. His story is remarkable – thought to be dead, "yet alive" and prime minister in Egypt.

When Jacob approached the end of his life Joseph brought his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, before the patriarch to be blessed. It was then that a remarkable thing took place. Joseph thought his father was mistaken as he crossed his arms over the boys, giving the birthright blessing to the younger son, Ephraim, and not to the elder son, Manasseh. Jacob said that he knew full well what he was doing and that while Manasseh would become "a great people," Ephraim would become greater in prestige and would grow into "a multitude of nations," confirmed by the fact that Joseph was to have two portions (*Ezekiel* 47:13).

The prophetic sign of Jacob's arms being crossed has been in evidence in the ensign of the Union Jack, which for over two centuries has been an "ensign to the nations" (*Isaiah* 5:26), for the great company of British covenant nations of the Free World, led by the people of the birthright. It needs to be understood by Christians, who value the Word of God, that two-thirds of the Bible is prophecy and that the great history of the British Empire and Commonwealth is Joseph's birthright in literal fulfilment. This company of nations is supported, as they have been for a century and more, by the special relationship that they have with the great people of the United States of America.

The story of Joseph in modern times has gripped the public for forty years through the musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, which in 2009 is being performed nightly in London. The prophetic vision is powerfully portrayed and while it might be dismissed by theologians as just a nice biblical story with no literal fulfilment and application today, this is exactly the position taken by false shepherds who will be found exposed and naked when the tide of falsehood recedes – much like the experience of the financiers and bankers in the present global credit crisis.

MICHAEL A CLARK

2009

THE ANOINTINGS OF JESUS

As the familiar strains of Handel's beloved oratorio, *Messiah*, ring out again this Eastertide, we may profitably recall to mind the meaning of the Hebrew name 'Messiah'. While it is a well-known epithet of our Lord, surprisingly it is used only four times in the entire Bible – twice each in the books of *Daniel* and *John*. But its Greek equivalent – Christos, Christ – is found over five hundred times in the New Testament! Both names mean simply, 'anointed.' Now we know that Jesus was anointed by God at His baptism, when the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove was seen descending from heaven and lighting upon Him. But it is often overlooked that Jesus was also physically anointed by a woman or women prior to His death on the cross and burial. In fact, though they are not usually included as part of the Easter story, the anointings of Jesus had an integral role to play in the sacred drama, and we can learn much from examining them more closely.

The accounts of these anointings are found in all of the four Gospels, but having differing details in each, so they are often taken to be garbled versions of the same, single event. But the Gospels are not garbled; they are the Word of God, and as such must be taken at face value. The fact is that there were three separate anointings of Jesus, at three different times, and in three different locations.

The first anointing, related in *Luke* 7:36-50, took place early in Jesus' ministry, apparently in Galilee, at the house of Simon the Pharisee. The unnamed woman washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and anointed them with ointment, wiping them with her hair. This is the only instance in which washing with her tears is mentioned, indicating her repentance for her sins, as Jesus illustrates in His parable spoken then and His word to her, "*Thy sins are forgiven*." This unnamed woman has been equated in the past with Mary Magdalene, as we are first introduced to Mary in the following chapter of *Luke*. From this it was deduced that Mary Magdalene was a 'sinner,' in the sense of unchaste, giving her the stigma of 'prostitute' for nearly two thousand years. However there is no scriptural warrant for this identification, and finally recognizing this, the hitherto official title of 'penitent' has recently (1969) been removed from the Magdalen by the Vatican.

Some two and a half years later, the second anointing took place in Bethany, at the house of Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead (*John* 12:1-8). We are told it occurred six days before the Passover – the Passover at which Jesus was crucified. This time it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anointed Jesus, as she is mentioned by name both here and in chapter 11:2. Again she anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. Some have raised the question as to whether Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene were the same person. Certainly it is a possibility when they both have the same name and the strong tradition in southern France, where Mary, Martha and Lazarus came after the crucifixion, is that they were the same woman. We do not have enough evidence to prove it one way or the other; nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that it is quite possible.

(Local traditions of Provence and ancient manuscripts claim that Lazarus became the first bishop of Massilia, now Marseilles; that Martha ministered at Tarascon, where the whole town is still devoted to her; and that Mary lived for many years in a cave near La Sainte Baume, preaching the gospel. Her relics are said to be preserved in the basilica of La Madeleine in Vezelay and in the church of St. Maximim in Provence.)*

Finally the third anointing occurred at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, four days later. It is related in *Matthew* 26:6-13 and *Mark* 14:1-9. This time the unnamed woman, whom I believe to be Mary Magdalene, poured the ointment on His head, rather than His feet, indicating that symbolically His whole body had been anointed. In both these anointings before the Passover, Jesus said that the women had anointed Him for His burial, which was to occur only a few days later. Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples that He would be crucified and buried, and rise again the third day, but the Word says the saying was "hid from them" – they did not understand it and were afraid to ask. Is it possible that these female disciples alone did understand, and so took the appropriate action that their great love for Jesus required? Certainly Jesus attested of the last anointing that wherever the gospel would be preached, what the woman had done would be spoken of as a memorial to her.

The reason why there were three separate anointings, rather than just one, is because God requires two or three witnesses to confirm a thing. This is stated repeatedly throughout scripture, including by Jesus Himself, when He said, "*In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established*" (*Matthew* 18:16). So one anointing alone would not have been sufficient to properly anoint Jesus for burial. If Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene were indeed one and the same, then she would have anointed Jesus twice – first on the feet, and then four days later on the head.

The Fragrance of Spikenard

That is a brief overview of the events, but to get the whole significance we must look at them in more detail. The women who anointed Jesus were said to have brought an alabaster box of spikenard, a sweet-smelling ointment that was very precious. It was derived from the nard plant, which in those days grew only in the Himalayan Mountains, at heights of around 15,000 feet, and thus had to be traded over great distances. Hence it was extremely expensive, as the Gospels tell us. On two of the occasions some of Jesus' disciples, including notably Judas Iscariot, complained that it was wasteful, as the ointment could have been sold for three hundred pence, and the money given to the poor. (John tells us in an aside that Judas said that, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the common purse and pilfered what was in it.) Three hundred pence does not sound like much until one realizes that in that day the going wage was a penny per day (*Matthew* 20:1-2), so three hundred pence would have been nearly a year's wages! Jesus' reply to the disciples was that there would always be the poor to whom they could do good, but that they would not always have Him, and that the women had done it for His burying. But why was it necessary to use such a costly ointment, rather than common olive oil? The answer is what the spikenard symbolized.

Spikenard is also mentioned in the Old Testament in the Song of Solomon, the canticle or love poem between Christ and His Bride. The Bridegroom compares His Bride to an orchard of pleasant fruits and spices, which are then listed: "*camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes*" (*Song of Solomon* 4:13-14). Although there are nine spices named, notice that the spikenard is mentioned twice. This is not redundant, but relates to the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, states that the fruit of the Spirit is: "*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance* [or self-control]" (*Galatians* 5:22-3). Notice that there are nine fruits, the same number as the spices. So it would seem that the spices represent spiritual fruit, qualities characteristic of the Lord's Bride. Then there are also nine gifts of the Spirit, as given in I *Corinthians* 12, which I will not list except to say that one of the gifts is faith. So faith is both a fruit and a gift of the Spirit; it is the only one mentioned twice. So by analogy, as spikenard is also mentioned twice, then spikenard must represent faith. This is confirmed by the Gospel account in *Luke*, where the unnamed woman anointed Jesus' feet, as Jesus' word to her was, "*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace*" (*Luke* 7:50).

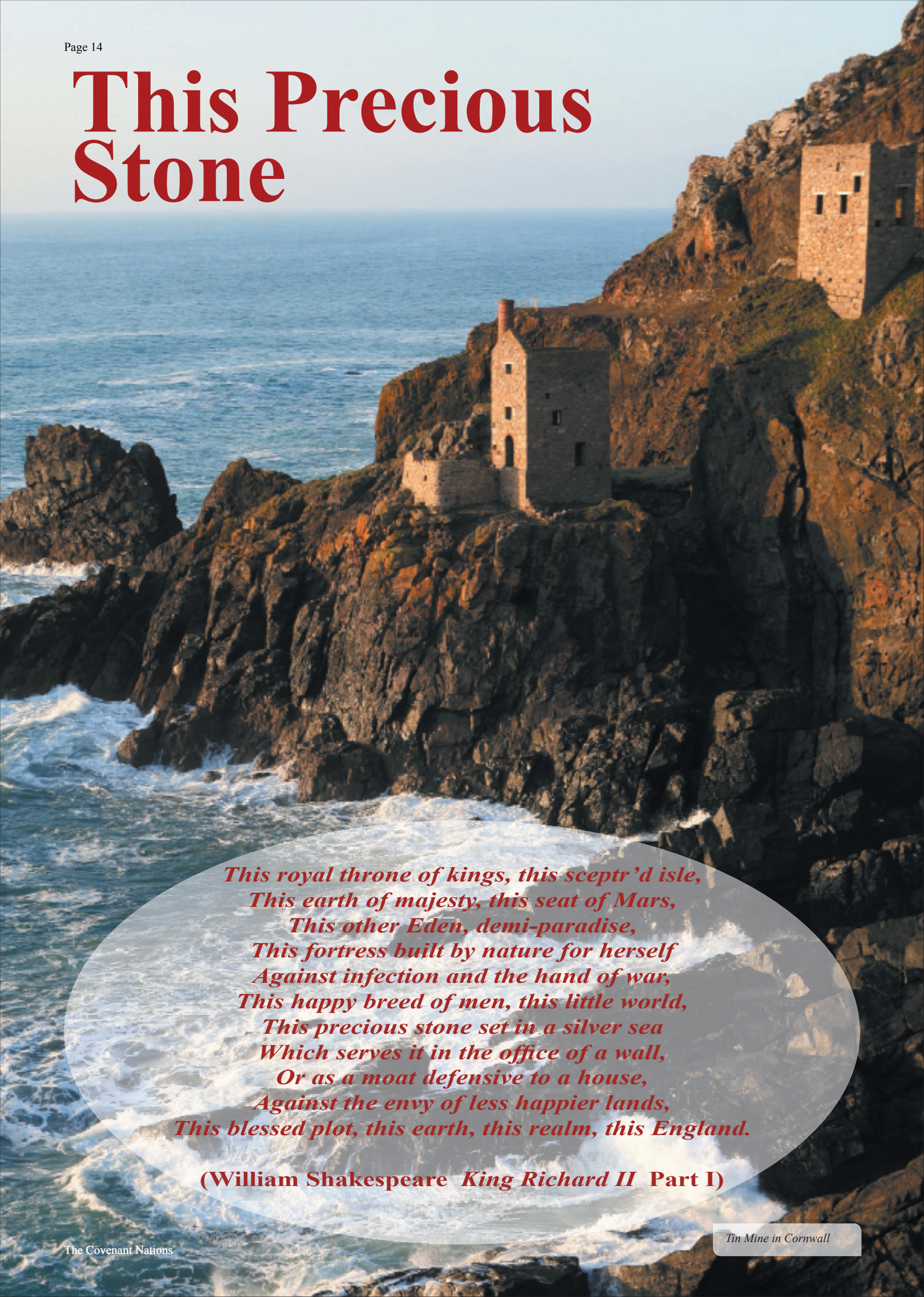
A deeper study of the Word also confirms this. In the Greek 'spikenard' is rendered by two words, nardos pistikos, meaning 'genuine nard.' But the root of the word pistikos also has the meanings, 'reliance upon Christ, assurance, belief, faith' (Strong's *Concordance* # 4101, 4102); so it is no accident what the spikenard represents. Now we see why it was so costly, as it expresses how precious our faith is to God. The Gospel of *John* tells us that when Mary anointed Jesus' feet with a pound of spikenard, "*the house was filled with the odour of the ointment*" (*John* 12:3). When our faith is exercised, as hers was then, it is a sweet-smelling fragrance to God – nothing is more precious to Him (see I *Peter* 1:7). Faith is invisible; the visible sign of it is the spikenard, just as incense is the visible sign of prayer (*Luke* 1:10). And to bring this home to us, the central verse of the entire Bible is *Psalm* 118:8 which says, "*It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man*." The whole message of the Bible can be summed up in those few words, as they are the key to our relationship to God, and our salvation in and through Him. This is the vital lesson we can learn from the humble women who consecrated Jesus as the Christ, the Lord's Anointed, the Messiah.

PATRICIA BAGWELL

* See *The Drama of the Lost Disciples* by Jowett and *The Coming of the Saints* by Taylor. Both books available from The Covenant Publishing Co. Ltd., 121 Low Etherley, Bishop Auckland, DL14 0HA, United Kingdom.

Valerian is related to the perennial plant from which spikenard is obtained

This Precious Stone



This royal throne of kings, this sceptr'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in a silver sea
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

(William Shakespeare *King Richard II* Part I)

Tin Mine in Cornwall

William Shakespeare saw his native land as a "precious stone, set in a silver sea." Did he realize the full significance of these words? We Kingdom believers can more fully understand his beautiful lines when we relate them to certain biblical promises. In the time of King David the Lord spoke, through His prophet Nathan, a prophecy that must have been puzzling to the king, for at that time he was comfortably established as the ruler of a united kingdom of Israel. He must have wondered why the Lord should have promised an 'appointed place.' Surely, he was in the Promised Land already.

Nathan, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, "*Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime*" (II *Samuel* 7:10).
In His foreknowledge, the Lord knew that the ten tribes of Israel would split from the two tribes of Judah, and that the two Houses would be taken into captivity. The Northern House of Israel never returned to the Promised Land, although the Southern House of Judah went back to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in order to be ready for the first coming of the Lord Jesus. In His mercy, the Lord prepared a place for the wandering tribes of the Northern House, where they might settle.

As with his work of creation, the Lord saw that His provision for His wayward people was very good. Its setting is unique. At 49° N in the south to 61° N in the North, the British Isles share some of the same latitudes as Labrador. However, the climate is vastly different. Labrador is a land of freezing winters, lasting for nine months. There is barren tundra in the north, and there are extensive forests in the south. It is only sparsely inhabited by Inuit peoples, a very hardy race, used to cold climatic conditions. The British Isles, on the other hand, enjoy a temperate climate, suitable for crop growing and orchard fruits. The Lord set this precious stone in exactly the right place for these conditions, because the western shores are bathed in the warmer waters of the Gulf Stream. We benefit from the North Atlantic Drift, which enables palms to be grown in the Scilly Isles and even as far up as Oban, in Scotland. Many gardens on the western coast of Scotland can grow tropical plants. All this on a similar latitude to a land where the temperatures seldom go much above freezing! What mercy by the Lord! What amazing grace and provision!

It is not only in the climate that the British Isles are especially favoured, for the Lord gave rich stores of minerals. From very early times traders came from the eastern Mediterranean to barter goods in exchange for tin, copper, and gold. The tin and copper were particularly prized as they were the constituents of the alloy bronze, extensively used in the ancient world. The Isles are also favoured in their plentiful water supply. The climate provides adequate rainfall, and the land is seldom subject to drought. The Lord had promised to provide all necessities, as long as His people kept His laws. "*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God*" (*Deuteronomy* 28:1-2).

"Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel"
II *Samuel* 7:10

From very early times the Phoenicians (accompanied by members of the Israelitish tribes) had ventured as far as the British Isles to purchase the minerals, and they brought goods from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Hebrew settlers were the first to arrive, coming by way of Spain and Portugal. They landed in Ireland and Scotland as well as in the West Country of England. In those days the Islands were known as Albion and Ierne (Ireland). While they were in Spain and Portugal the peninsula was called Iberia, a name still used today, which clearly shows its origin. Ireland was later called Hibernia, another name which can trace the same origin in the word 'Hebrew,' while yet another instance is the Hebrides, islands off the Scottish mainland.

These forerunners of the later influx of Israelitish people became the ancient British peoples who dwelt in the Appointed Place for many years until the main migrations began. These people dwelt in wooden houses. They were accomplished agriculturists. Their religion and their languages were closely akin to that of the ancient Hebrews. They were considered to be sun worshippers, but some modern archaeologists think that their religion was monotheistic to begin with, and that they used the sun as a symbol of the one Creator God. Their language has come down to us in the modern form of Welsh, which is said to be very close to ancient Hebrew. Welsh still contains many words that are very similar to the Hebrew, with meanings that are also very much like those in the Hebrew. In syntax, also, it has been said that Welsh agrees more with the Hebrew tongue than with any other.

When the bulk of the twelve tribes began to come into these islands, they found them sparsely inhabited, but with agriculture well established, and a well organized set of laws and customs. After initial fighting, the newcomers settled down with their neighbours in comparative harmony, demonstrating their kinship. Today, we are experiencing an influx of alien peoples, but they are not integrating happily with the indigenous population. This is because they are not of the same stock, as were the Angles, Saxons, Danes and Normans with the Celts. A later immigration of a large number of people came in the 17th and 18th centuries. These people were the Huguenots, fleeing from persecution in their homelands. There were no problems with their integration, since they were also of the same stock. They brought many skills and specialised industries with them, thus contributing a great deal to the economy.

When the seven times of chastisement began to draw to a close, the Lord particularly blessed His people with discoveries in agriculture that increased yields, thus supporting a growing population, and following from this advance came the age of invention and industrialization, which increased Britain's prosperity and influence. During this time the nation still worshipped the Lord. Initially, He was given the glory for the new and better standards of living. There were religious revivals and reformers sought to address cruelties and inequalities in the national life, fighting to abolish slavery and child labour. The Lord fulfilled His promises for as long as His people kept their side of the bargain, and gave Him the glory.

Unfortunately, at this same time, there was a growing movement calling itself the 'Enlightenment.' The intellectuals heading this movement rejected an all powerful God, and brought in the worship of Reason – in other words, putting mankind's intellect (which is God-given, after all!) in the place of due reverence of the Creator. Satan could not bear to see Israel in the Isles prospering, so he had to work overtime to sabotage the Lord's work and subvert His people. We are witnessing the results of this diabolical campaign in our

own day. Education, religion and politics have come so far away from God's standards that we are now reaping the whirlwind.

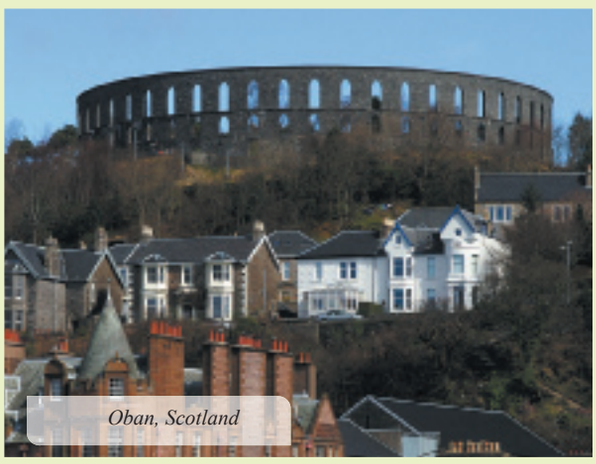
We have only to look around us at the parlous state of this nation, to realise that we are being punished once more for our unfaithfulness. We, who love our Scriptures, and do our best to obey the Lord's commands, are caught up in this chastisement, and are suffering, and will suffer, until the nation truly repents. It grieves us to see this jewel of an Appointed Place misused and abused as is happening now. Our task, therefore, is to teach our fellow men the truths from God's Word, and never weary in our task, even though it seems to be harder to interest people with every day that passes. We have to bear in mind the Lord Jesus' words, "*Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth*?"(*Luke* 18:8). The Lord is sorting out the true and faithful remnant, and we must work in the hope of being counted among their number.

At the same time that Great Britain was entering the Industrial Revolution and beginning to prosper, one of the Lord's ancient prophecies was fulfilled. You will remember that when Jacob was nearing his end, he blessed his sons and grandsons. These blessings were prophetic. Concerning Joseph, he said, "*Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall*:" (*Genesis* 49:22). At the end of the times of chastisement, the population of these islands began to feel the pressures of land hunger, and adventurous souls, or those suffering from religious persecution, said, in the words of Scripture, "*The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell*" (*Isaiah* 49:20).

Much migration took place, initially to America, but after the Americans declared their independence from the mother country, people still sought a better life in other colonies, for the Age of Discovery had come in. In this way the "branches ran over the wall," and another great nation was born. The American constitution was instituted by godly men, on Christian principles, and God honoured their faith by giving them a land of great natural resources. Thus was fulfilled another prophecy by Jacob, "*And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations*" (*Genesis* 48:17-20).

We can be sure that we are in the 'appointed place,' not just by counting the material blessings that God has given us in these islands, but when we look at the instances in our history when we have been given special protection. There are many instances of God's special provision in rescuing us from invasion, especially the well-known ones of the Armada, the Angels of Mons, Dunkirk, and many others. God chastises us in measure, but He will not allow the sons of Jacob to be consumed.

In these Last Days we are allowing our beautiful land to be divided into regions that bear no resemblance to our ancient counties; we have unelected people presiding over these regions, and the south east of England is lumped together with northern France to become an artificial region known as La Manche (The Channel). Please note that it is not even the English Channel any more. The European Union is determined that we should lose our identity and our history, aided and abet ted by a supine government. Satan would love us to lose our identity and our roots. It is part of his great counter plan against God's Great Plan. Scotland, Ireland and Wales are casting themselves loose from the once Great Britain, the United Kingdom. England no longer seems to exist in the minds of officialdom. How are the mighty fallen!



Oban, Scotland

The Church, too, has fallen badly short in its work, which should be to teach the people. Instead, in so many cases, it spiritualises the Scriptures and ignores the practical warnings, laws and prophecies. Ministers, on the whole, do not realise that the Bible is a book about God's servant people, and not just a collection of myths and moral stories. This lack of teaching has led to apathetic and agnostic people, even, in many cases, actively atheistic. Universities and colleges have fostered the sceptical view of the Bible. Because of this false teaching, we are witnessing a breakdown of standards in our modern society, and much perplexity about the way in which it can be tackled.

We must, and we will, repent and come into the Lord's house with weeping and earnest prayers for our deliverance. At the moment such a large section of the people seems to be indifferent, but as the economic problems worsen, I believe that more and more people will come to realise our danger and fall to their knees in repentance. Impossible though it may seem at present amongst our secular and selfish society, it will happen, because the Lord has said that He will do it for us. What mercy, after the way we have treated Him! We know that this is so, for it is in His Holy Word, "*Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*;" (*Ezekiel* 36:37).

"*Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people*" (*Joel* 2:15-19).

Only by God's grace will we be rescued from the results of our apostasy and horrible sins, and for this sure hope we should be exceedingly grateful, for the Lord will honour His promise to Abraham, as He stated in *Genesis* 12:1-3, and we shall properly fulfil our destiny, "*And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing*:".

VALERIE MARTLEW

THE STORY OF EAU

When the marvels of God's plan for His creation are considered it is usually the wonders of life in all its forms which are foremost in people's minds. The following edited article reminds us that the mineral world also demonstrates His guiding hand.

Water is a chemical miracle and a biological mystery, according to *The Sunday Telegraph's* science correspondent, Robert Matthews, writing in *The New Scientist*. Although water is one of the simplest of all compounds – a single oxygen molecule flanked by two of hydrogen – all life on Earth depends on the fact that it does not obey the most elementary laws of chemistry.

Were it to do so, ponds and lakes would freeze from the bottom up in winter, killing all aquatic life. This is because liquids, when frozen, shrink, become heavier and sink. But water is the exception to this rule. When cooled to below four degrees centigrade, water expands and rises – which is why lakes ice over to create an insulating layer on top, below which fish can happily carry on feeding and procreating.

In addition, water is much more difficult to heat than other liquids, but once warmed is slow to cool. This allows us to enjoy long, hot baths but, more importantly, protects us from sudden climate changes and permits ocean currents such as the Gulf Stream to carry solar heat from the tropics towards the Poles.

As humans are made up of 70 per cent water, our existence depends on another peculiar property of water – its amazing capacity as a solvent. Rather than clogging up the kidneys, chemicals and nitrogenous wastes are excreted in a soluble form through the urine. Water is thus a far more remarkable compound than it is given credit for.

Similarly, its unique physical properties when heated or cooled, as steam or ice, have many therapeutic uses.

'Eau' is French for water

Heat is highly beneficial to injured or inflamed tissues. Hot compresses applied to a stye or boil, for example, dilate the surrounding blood vessels, increase the blood flow and with it, the concentration of white blood cells that combat infection. When hot water penetrates beneath the surface of the body it relaxes the painful spasm of inflamed muscles. This makes hot baths and hot-water bottles a popular remedy for those suffering from arthritis or menstrual cramps.

Water is an equally good medium for transmitting cold, whether in the form of cold baths, ice cubes or a towel wrung out in water. Predictably, this has the reverse effect of heat, constricting the blood vessels and reducing the amount of fluid that leaks out in response to acute injuries. Cold also deadens the nerves so it is a useful analgesic. Much the best treatment for a strained ankle is the local application of ice packs which increases the pain-free range of movement while preventing swelling. Similarly, cold water as a treatment for first-degree burns is based on sound physiological principles: the cold both depresses the nerve fibres of the skin and minimises the risk of blistering.

In the form of steam, water can be inhaled, thus dissolving infected secretions and opening up the nose and airways. The efficacy of this treatment has been confirmed in a study by Dr David Tyrell, formerly director of the Medical Research Council's Common Cold Unit, who found the severity of cold symptoms was halved in patients regularly using steam inhalation.

Adding up the conditions for which water in its various forms can be useful, one realises its impressive therapeutic properties. And there are more. Salt dissolved in a glass of water and gargled soothes the discomfort of tonsillitis and gum infection.

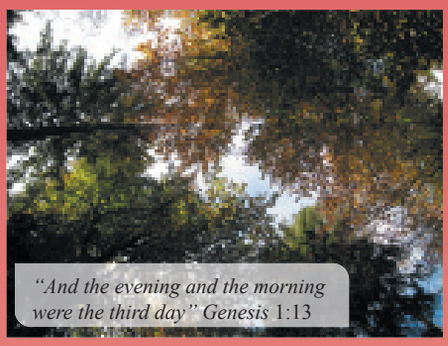
Water can be seen as God's little joke. He created a universe governed by physical laws and then, as a reminder of His creativity and power, ensured that one simple compound broke them all. Further, as Robert Matthews points out in his article, water creates a particular problem for atheists who believe that life arose spontaneously on Earth by the chance accretion of molecules of DNA. This, like everything, is soluble in water, which tears its twin strands apart. So the DNA helix 'could never have survived long enough on the primordial Earth to become established as a carrier of genetic information.'

DR JAMES LE FANU
The Sunday Telegraph,
13th July 1997

SCIENCE FALSELY SO CALLED

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (I *Timothy* 6:20)."

The BBC News for Saturday, 13th September 2008 gave the following report: "*Creationism should be discussed in school science lessons, rather than excluded, says the director of education at the Royal Society. Professor Michael Reiss says that if pupils have strongly-held beliefs about creationism these should be explored. Rather than dismissing creationism as a 'misconception,' he says it should be seen as a cultural 'world view.' Teachers should*



"And the evening and the morning were the third day" Genesis 1:13

take the time to explain why creationism had no scientific basis, Prof Reiss said. He stressed that the topic should not be taught as science. This was more valuable than simply 'banging on' about evolution, he said. Prof Reiss, a biologist and Church of England minister, said he now believed it was more effective to engage with pupils' ideas about creationism, rather than to obstruct discussion with those who do not accept the scientific version of the evolution of species ... Creationists take a literal interpretation of the Bible's description of the origin of life and reject the Darwinian concept of evolution. Some Muslims also support creationist theories. Prof Reiss, speaking at the British Association Festival of Science at the University of Liverpool, estimates that about one in 10 children is from a family which supports a creationist view rather than evolutionary. He says that in his experience it is more effective to include discussion about creationism alongside scientific theories such as the Big Bang and evolution."

Rather than raising the question as to whether or not Creationism ought to be included in school science lessons, the question should really be why the theory of evolution and the Big Bang is taught as science. The term science comes from the Latin '*scientia*' meaning knowledge. According to Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, the definition of science is: '*knowledge attained through study or practice*.'

Science refers to a system of acquiring knowledge. This system uses observation and experimentation to describe and explain natural phenomena. The term science also refers to the organized body of knowledge people have gained using that system. One simple piece of proven knowledge is that it is scientifically impossible for anything to evolve from an elementary form to a complex form without an external input of two essential components, namely intelligence and energy. Moreover, according to the proven second law of thermodynamics everything naturally winds down to disorder and its lowest energy level.

It is well known that, left to themselves, all chemical compounds ultimately break apart into simpler materials; they do not ultimately become more complex. Outside forces can increase order for a time through the expenditure of relatively large amounts of energy, and through the input of intelligent design. However, such reversal cannot and does not last.

In order to avoid this damning verdict of real science, evolutionists propose a curious distinction between the animate and inanimate: "*Living organisms, however, differ from inanimate matter by the degree of complexity of their systems and by the possession of a genetic program… The genetic instructions packaged in an embryo direct the formation of an adult, whether it be a tree, a fish, or a human. The process is goal-directed, but from the instructions in the genetic program, not from the outside. Nothing like it exists in the inanimate world*."

(Ernst Mayr in Roger Lewin, "Biology Is Not Postage Stamp Collecting," *Science*, *Vol. 216*, No. 4547 May 14th, 1982, pp.718-720)

But no satisfactory scientific explanation has ever been made for the origin of animate organisms. The scientific law of biogenesis lays down the principle that life can only come from life. Animate matter cannot arise from inanimate matter. Long before the theory of evolution became popular in western culture, Greek philosophers had propounded the idea of life appearing spontaneously.

The Apostle Paul warns Timothy the young Greek bishop at Ephesus to avoid such "*science falsely so called*." *Acts* 16:1 tells us of: "*Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek*."

"And the evening and the morning were the fourth day" Genesis 1:19

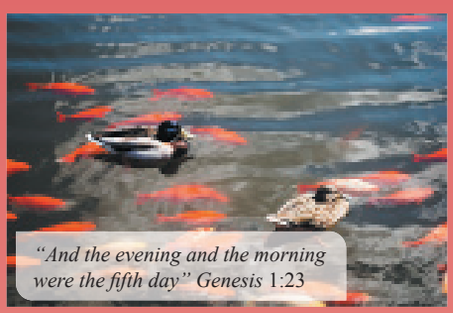
The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) wrote of his '*Scala Naturae*,' or 'Ladder of Life,' to explain his concept of the advancement of living things from inanimate matter to plants, then animals and inally man.

"The biggest gap in evolutionary theory remains the origin of life itself."
Chris Wills, professor of biology at the University of California, San Diego.
New Scientist, 31st January 2009

Heraclitus of Ephesus (535 – 475 BC) denies Creation, in Fragment 30, he wrote: "*This world-order ... no god nor man did create, but it ever was and is and will be*." He names the steps of the process from air to water, and thence to earth.

Anaximander of Miletus (611 – 547 BC) deduces living beings, in a gradual development, from moisture under the influence of warmth, and suggests the view that men originated from animals of another sort.

Thales of Miletus (624 BC - 547 BC) (Herodotus suggests that his parents were Phoenician) asserts that all things originated from water. Shamefully, it is possible that these ancient Greeks had Israelitish ancestry. In which case, they should have known better than to deny God as Creator.



Jesus in controversy with the Jewish leaders of his day, told them of his departure: " … *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me … Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him*? *Will he go unto the dispersed among the* (Helenes) *Greeks*" (*John* 7:32-35). '*The dispersed*' were, of course, the vast majority of Israelites 'lost' among the Gentile nations for centuries, outside of Palestine.

Maccabees in the Apocrypha links the Israelites to the Greeks descended from Abraham: "*Areus king of the Spartans to Onias the* (Jewish) *high priest, greeting: It is found in writing, that the Spartans and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham*" (I *Maccabees* 12:20-21).

Homer, Pindar, Euripedes, Strabo mention the Danai people descended from their father Danaus who came from Egypt and founded the Greek city of Argos. R G Latham in his *The Ethnology of Europe* p.137 states: " … *neither do I think that the eponymous of the Argive Danai was other than the Israelite tribe of Dan; only we are so used to confine ourselves to the soil of Palestine in our consideration of the history of the Israelites, that we ... ignore the share they may have taken in the ordinary history of the world*."

Moreover, Ezekiel also links the tribe of Dan and Greece: "*Dan also and Javan* (Biblical name for Greece - *Brown's Dictionary of The Bible*) *going to and fro occupied in thy fairs*" (*Ezekiel* 27:19).

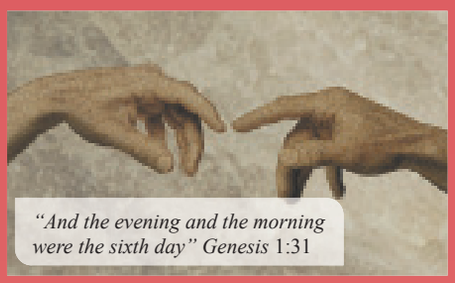
Other writers have also suggested a connection between these Danites and the early invaders of the islands and coastlands of western Europe: "*The Dan-ans were a people of great learning and wealth: they left Greece after a battle with the Assyrians, and went to Ireland, and also to Denmark, and called it Danmares* (*Dans Country*)" (Keating G – *History of Ireland Vol.1*: p.195-199). "*The Tuatha de Danaans ... who after sojourning sometime in Greece ... proceeded from thence to Denmark and Norway*" (Moore T – *History of Ireland Vol.1*: p.59). "*The Tuatha de Danaans of Ireland came from the Danai of Greece*" (Gladstone *Juventus Mundi*).

The Encyclopedia Britannica 11th ed. Vol.8 "Denmark" states: "*According to late Danish tradition ... Jutland was acquired by Dan, the ... ancestor of the Danes from whom the name derives*." No great surprise then, that the hot bed of 'Blind Chance' evolution theory should have been in Western Europe.

For well over a hundred years now, protagonists have desperately sought evidence to prop up this godless theory. What are the grand results of this intense pursuit?

How many transitional fossils have been found indicating any stages of evolution from one species to another? None!

'Blind Chance' enthusiasts talk endlessly on the idea of 'natural selection' and 'mutations' as the mechanisms which foster evolution between species. However, exhaustive experiments and studies in mutations and natural selection (survival of the fittest) all indicate that these naturally occurring phenomena, far from promoting development and enhancement of species are harmful, tending to reduce gene pools and species.



Professor Dobzhansky, a noted geneticist and evolutionary biologist, admits that indeed the majority of mutations: "*produce deteriorations of viability, hereditary diseases, and monstrosities. Such changes, it would seem, can hardly serve as evolutionary building blocks*" (*Genetics and the Origin of Species* p.73).

Furthermore it is well known by biologists that: "*In 99% of cases the mutation of a gene produces some kind of harmful effect, some disturbance of function*." (*Scientific American* Nov. 1955: p.58).

The theory of 'Blind Chance' evolution stemming from an imaginary 'Big Bang' has not a single shred of scientific basis.

St Paul writing to the Church in Rome warns that God is angry with those who deny creation: "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ... For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse*" (*Romans* 1:18-20).

So, OK, leave Creationism, the underpinning doctrine of the Christian Faith, within the compass of Religious Education where it belongs. But remove 'Blind Chance' teaching from the science curriculum where it most definitely does not belong, and place it among alternative religions.

MARTIN LIGHTFOOT

"We still don't know what the common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees looks like, where and how it lived, and what processes sent us down our separate evolutionary paths."
Chris Stringer is in the dept of palaeontology at the Natural History Museum, London
New Scientist, 31st January 2009

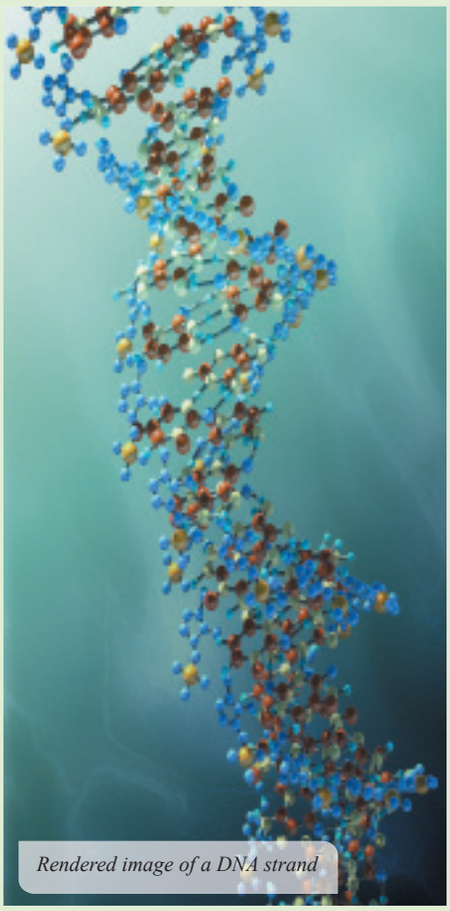
THE TOWER OF BABEL AND ITS MODERN COUNTERPARTS

In the eleventh chapter of *Genesis* there is recorded the curious story of the Tower of Babel. Although it is an account of something which happened centuries ago it provides some strange parallels with our world today, and some lessons to be learned – if, indeed, the people of the 21st century (politicians in particular) ever learn the lessons of history.

The Tower of Babel, we are told, was built as a co-operative effort some 120 years after the flood. It is surely no coincidence that 120 years before the flood Noah began preaching to the people of his day, pointing out the evil of their ways and warning them of disasters to come if they did not change their behaviour. At the same time, acting on God's instructions, he began the building of the Ark for the saving of his household. The people would not listen, but because Noah obeyed God he and his family were saved when the flood waters engulfed the earth.

Eventually the rain ceased, the waters receded and the Ark was grounded. Exactly where this happened has long been a subject of conjecture and controversy. In his book *Primo Genesis* the late Howard Rand states that it must have been somewhere in the Himalayas and that the Ark is buried deep in the snows of Tibet, awaiting the day when God allows it to be discovered, thus proving the truth of His word. Howard Rand bases his assertion on the fact that the sons of Noah and their descendants who built the Tower of Babel travelled in a westerly direction to the plain of Shinar, where they settled. If the Ark had come to rest on the Mount Ararat in Armenia, as has been suggested, they would have had to travel south to reach the plain of Shinar.

Having settled in the valley of Shinar, the people decided to build a high tower which could reach to heaven and would be a lasting monument to human achievement. At that stage they all spoke the same language so the work was not hindered by a lack of understanding between the groups of workers, unlike some modern international undertakings which may



Rendered image of a DNA strand

be hampered by language difficulties. Building the tower was an ambitious project, but the planners reckoned without God. He had His own plan for the world and the people He had created and the overweening pride and ambition of the people of Shinar could not be allowed to continue, for there was no knowing where it might end and men might feel that nothing was beyond their abilities. We do not know exactly how it happened but we are told that God intervened by confusing their tongues so that they could no longer understand each other. The work was abandoned and the people scattered into their linguistic groups.

Now many centuries later, the world is in a similar situation. We no longer speak a common language but we live in what is often described as 'a global village.' We are financially and commercially interdependent, as the present economic crisis has made abundantly clear. The banking crisis in America has had a profound effect in countries as diverse and as far apart as Iceland and Japan, and has indeed affected every country in the world. There are undoubtedly plans afoot to establish a world government and a world religion. But, like the men of old, the politicians and the planners are not taking God into account. He has His own plans for the world and just as He intervened in the affairs of men in the plain of Shinar so He will also intervene in the affairs of modern man when He deems the time is right.

In the modern world there is no idea of building a tower to reach to heaven, for science has made us aware of the vast distances of the universe. Yet that same pride in human achievement is still there in many spheres of our modern life. There are architects and engineers who dream of designing the tallest building or the longest bridge in the world, or constructing the fastest aeroplane or automobile: there are sportsmen and women who dream of beating the latest land or water speed record either by their own physical efforts or in some kind of machine. This same feeling that there are no limits to what man can achieve can also be seen in the realm of medicine. Stem cell research, organ transplants and ever more powerful drugs seem to offer a healthier and longer life for everyone. The latest development, recorded in *The Daily Telegraph* on 21st November, 2008, is a claim that scientists are close to finding what they call 'the elixir of life.' Apparently an enzyme called Telemorase is capable of turning normal, mortal cells into immortal cells by rejuvenating them and so delaying the inevitable decay which leads to death. We also hear a great deal about 'designer babies' born by means of egg or sperm dona-

tion or the use of stem cells or other methods which go against all the laws of natural reproduction and which not long ago would have been the stuff of science fiction. Now that scientists have discovered how to clone living creatures, a process which could be extended to human beings, there is even a suggestion that it would be possible to clone a woolly mammoth by taking DNA samples from the body of a mammoth which died many ages ago when a sudden ice age descended on the earth. One cannot help wondering how it would benefit mankind to reconstitute a creature which God saw fit to exterminate so long ago.

In the realm of politics the leaders of the nations frequently meet in 'summits' and draw up plans and set themselves 'targets' for dealing with such problems as disease, poverty and climate change. All of this with a conspicuous lack of success.

And so we could go on and we may well ask 'where is it all going to end?' When men of old went too far in their pride and ambition God intervened. It is often said that history repeats itself. If history is really 'His story' as the Bible clearly indicates, then we may reasonably expect that the time will come when God will call a halt to such human activities and will set up His Kingdom which will be organised according to His laws and in which He will brook no interference from proud and ambitious mortals. Such a belief may well be scorned as unrealistic and unscientific by the sophisticated exponents of modern science but the Bible, which is the Word of God written for our guidance, has so often been proved to be true in the course of history that there is every reason to believe that the Kingdom of God will be established on earth and that it will far outshine all the dreams and expectations of human beings.

CAROL CREAM

BRITISH-ISRAEL - PLACES OF INTEREST

Where to visit in the South and Midlands

The second in a series of articles to highlight places to visit in the United Kingdom

Totnes, Devon

The Brutus Stone is set into the pavement on the right hand side, as you walk up Fore Street towards the East Gate Arch. The stone is next to No. 51 Fore Street, and is easily missed on a busy day. The Stone is linked in legend to a Trojan Prince who landed in Totnes whilst searching for an island promised to him by the goddess Diana. After the Trojan War, Brutus and a band of followers set out to find this promised land. They landed in Totnes with Brutus using the 'Brutus Stone' to disembark from their ship – as he stepped ashore onto the stone, he said; "Here I stand, and here I rest. The town shall be called Totnes." Brutus and his followers were, according to the legend, the first people to reach the shores of Britain; making Totnes, and the Brutus Stone, the place of origin of the British People.

Plymouth, Devon

The Mayflower Steps in Plymouth harbour indicate the place where the Pilgrim Fathers boarded the Mayflower and set sail for America. The Pilgrims were Separatists. They were similar to Puritans but differed in that they did not believe the Church of England could be reformed from within. A few hundred of them fled to Holland in 1608 where they did find religious freedom. As the years went by, they were dismayed that their children were becoming Dutch. This necessitated their relocation to the New World in 1620. With 102 men, women and children, many leaving wives and other children behind in England, they sailed off on 6th September on the ship Mayflower, heading for upper Virginia (which is now northern New Jersey) but were blown off course and instead arrived at Cape Cod. Another tablet commemorates the departure from Plymouth in May 1839 of the 'Tory,' the pioneer ship in the colonization of New Zealand. Yet another plaque details that on 13th March 1787, sailed the transport ships 'Friendship' and 'Charlotte' carrying men and women convicts bound for Australia. On 28th January 1788, with nine other ships from England they landed at Port Jackson, which became Sydney, New South Wales. There they established the first British Colony under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, R.N. the father of modern Australia.

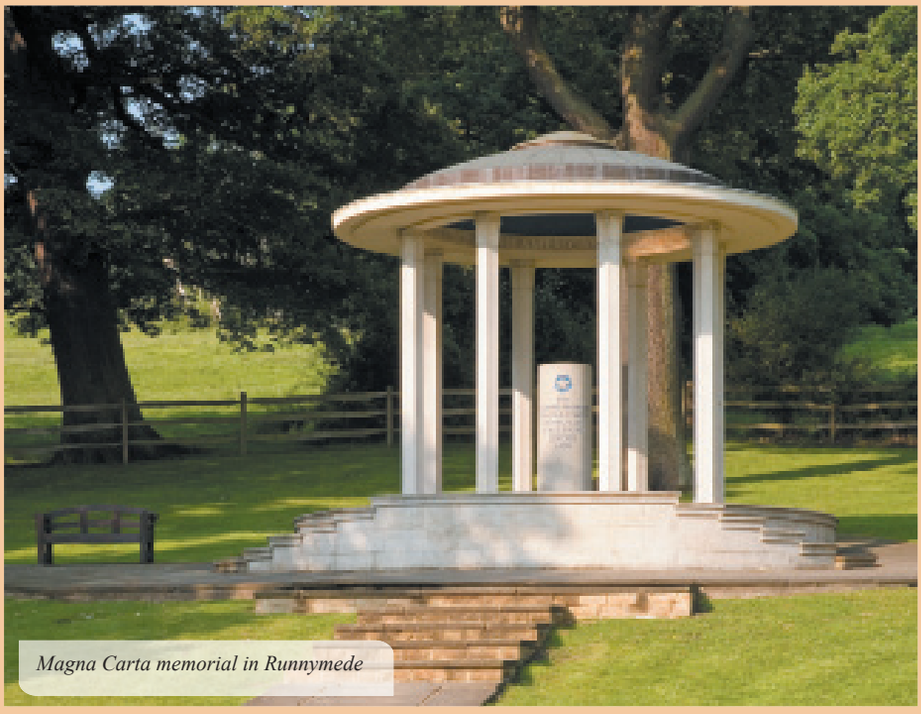
Lundy Island, Devon

Located in the estuary of the Bristol Channel, the Beacon Hill cemetery on Lundy Island was partly excavated in 1961 by K S Gardner and A Langham and further excavated by A C Thomas in 1969. Excavation showed that the early cemetery had at least 100 long cist graves of early Christian character. Some were small as if for children. Thomas believes the island was the home of a small ecclesiastical community which came into being by AD 480-500.

The Mayflower in Plymouth

Winchester, Hampshire

A magnificent statue of King Alfred who gave England its common law based on the Bible commandments as given to Israel. It is 2.5 times life size, 15 feet (4.57 m) high, and weighs 5 tons. The base, in two parts, is of Cornish Granite, and the whole stands 40 feet high. The right hand grasps a cross-hilted sword, the symbol of Christianity which was to combat the power of heathenism. The settlement of Winchester begins in about 150 BC when a large defended enclosure was created on the western slopes of the modern city, in the area of Oram's Arbour. Since that time, great kings and bishops have left lasting reminders of their presence. During Saxon times, Winchester was the capital of England – chosen by King Alfred (Alfred the Great) – and the city remained a Royal residence for centuries afterwards.



Magna Carta memorial in Runnymede

Lullingstone, Kent

A Roman villa is situated in Lullingstone near Eynsford in northwest Kent. In the 4th century a group of rooms of the main building were apparently converted to Christian use, with painted plaster on the walls, including a row of figures of standing worshippers, (orans), and a characteristic Christian Chi-rho symbol.

Rochester, Kent

Rochester Cathedral: A statue of Ethelbert, King of Kent from about 580 or 590, stands in Rochester Cathedral. He was the first Anglo Saxon king to convert to Christianity. He had married Bertha, the Christian daughter of Charibert, king of the Franks. The influence of Bertha may have led to Pope Gregory I's decision to send Augustine as a missionary from Rome. Augustine landed on the Isle of Thanet in 597.

Runnymede, Surrey

The Magna Carta memorial to the signing of the charter in 1215. Magna Carta was the most significant early influence on the extensive historical process that led to the rule of constitutional law today. It influenced the development of the Common law and many constitutional documents, such as the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights, and is considered one of the most important legal documents in the history of democracy. Magna Carta was originally written because of disagreements among Pope Innocent III, King John and the English barons about the rights of the King. Magna Carta required the King to renounce certain rights, respect certain legal procedures and accept that his will

could be bound by the law. It explicitly protected certain rights of the King's subjects, whether free or fettered, most notably the writ of *habeas corpus*.

Glastonbury, Somerset

Glastonbury Abbey: The Abbey exhibition describes the arrival of Christianity early in the 1st century AD. The site of the original wattle church is identified in the abbey grounds. A thorn tree of Middle Eastern origin that blossoms twice a year has been grown from the tree which flourished when Joseph of Arimathea planted his staff in the ground.

Pilton, Somerset

The present Norman and Medieval church dedicated to St. John the Baptist may stand on the site of an earlier wattle and daub church built by the early missionaries. Information cards in the church describe the arrival of Jesus at Pilton by boat. This event is embroidered on a banner at the front of the church.

Oxford

The Martyrs' Memorial is an imposing stone monument standing at the intersection of the southern end of St Giles Street in Oxford. It commemorates three Anglican bishops who were burned at the stake under Queen Mary in the 1550s: Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, and Hugh Latimer. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the Martyrs' Memorial was completed in 1842 after two years' work, having replaced 'a picturesque but tottering old house.' The spiky and pinnacled Decorated Gothic memorial has been likened to the spire of a sunken cathedral. It was Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury that gave the Church of England its prayer book. The prayers and liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer* identify the Christian believers of England with God's people Israel.

Colchester, Essex

St. Helen's Church is dedicated to Helena who, as stated on a board outside the church, was claimed to be the daughter of the British King Cole (a merry old soul) and wife of the Roman emperor Constantius. She became the mother of Constantine who in turn was crowned emperor in York. In AD 313 he pronounced Christianity as the faith of the empire in the Edict of Milan.

Fishtoft, Lincolnshire

The place where in 1607 the Pilgrim Fathers first tried to flee England for Holland. Just a little way out of Boston, a small Pilgrim Fathers' memorial, erected in 1957, marks the spot at Scotia Creek, Fishtoft, where the Pilgrims gathered to board a Dutch ship, before being betrayed and arrested.

Lutterworth, Leicestershire

A monument in front of the Methodist Church recognises the birthplace of John Wycliffe who was responsible for the first translation of the scriptures into the English language. Nearby is St Mary's Church of which he was rector from 1374, though he spent much of his time in London and Oxford. He spent the last 3 years of his life in Lutterworth,dying of a stroke on New Years Eve 1384.

MARTIN LIGHTFOOT

ENGLISH LITERATURE - A TREASURE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

The focus here is on William Shakespeare and John Milton, the other writers will be in the second part in the next issue

A study of the great classics of English literature is absolutely essential for at true education. The English classics have played a key role in teaching individual virtue and for laying foundations for western civilization.

Character Shaping

Reading the works of William Shakespeare, John Milton, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens helps us exercise our minds and enrich our experiences. Great Christian literature enables us to recognize truths, appreciate beauty and admire what is virtuous. The literary classics include drama that purges our minds, with breathtaking intensity, heartbreaking pathos and poetry that makes us hunger and thirst after virtue and courage.

Good literature enables us to recognize what is truly beautiful and honourable. It helps shape our character by teaching us to despise what is dishonourable, to love what is noble and to aspire to higher standards in our own lives.

In his 1950 Nobel Literature Award acceptance speech, William Faulkner described the primary duty of authors to remind men "*of the courage and honour and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past*."

The study of great works of literature has always been considered foundational in education.

Statue of Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon. Photo by John Battersby

Under Attack

Unfortunately, like every other aspect of western civilization, English literature is under relentless assault today. In all too many universities, '*English professors*' seem to be teaching almost anything and everything but classic English literature. Many who have enrolled in English classes at university have found themselves studying Marxist theory, an investigation of pornography through the ages, the gender theories of Freud, Latin culture, feminist theories, deconstructionism, lesbianism, misogyny, tirades against racism, sexism, colonialism, homophobia, and a bewildering array of other radical post-modern political agendas.

Many '*politically correct*' professors in English departments so despise and fear western civilization that those enrolling to learn more of English literature are more likely to find themselves assailed with bankrupt ideologies than to be exposed to some of the greatest literature in western civilization.

Back to the Sources
Instead of subjecting oneself to anti-Christian indoctrination in so called '*English*' departments of some universities, students would immeasurably enrich their experience and their education by going directly to the works of Dickens, Austen, Milton, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Waugh, Blake, Chaucer, Mallory, and other greats of English literature.

The Value of English Literature
English literature teaches appreciation for military valour, chastity and integrity. Self-criticism and the Christian Faith are at the heart of English literature. Beauty and ugliness in our characters are exposed, along with the capacities for good and evil of the human mind and heart. Skill is admired, achievement is extolled, the disastrous consequences of laziness, cowardice and foolishness are laid out. There are an infinite variety of wonderful life-changing lessons to be learnt from English literature.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
William Shakespeare's plays have universal appeal because of his intuitive understanding of human nature. Shakespeare's plays reflect the world as it is. Shakespeare evidences a comprehensive, accurate and deep perception of the nature of things, especially of human nature.

Insightful
Shakespeare's plays are delightful, breathtaking, real and natural. He gives us characters who show us more about what human beings really are. When you see a Shakespeare play, you recognise the characters; you know them from your own experience, although his insights enable us to understand these characters better than ever before.

Hamlet
Hamlet is much more than a depressed and confused young man. He is self-conscious, sensitive to the moral failings of his elders, keenly aware of the implications of everyone's actions, but tragically unwilling to shoulder responsibility and to gain control over events.

Richard III
Richard III is a wicked king who resents other people's happiness, and plots to ruin them for his own advantage. He is an outrageous villain whose schemes succeed for a time, but then unravel completely.

Defining the Issues
Shakespeare's plays enable us to understand human nature, human history, and the things that human beings think about, in a clearer way than any other playwright has succeeded in doing. Shakespeare's characters look at things from many different angles. They do not merely consider the issues, they define them. His plays are full of famous speeches which get to the heart of an issue.

Death
Each play seems to explore a major issue. For example *Hamlet* considers death from every angle. Why we long for death. Why we fear it. What it does to our bodies. What it does to our souls. What we know about death. Its mysteries. The many ways that there are to die. The many reasons for dying. *Hamlet* includes a girl who goes

mad and kills herself. A rash young man who throws his life away in a duel over his sister's honour. A scheming courtier who is killed as he eavesdrops. College friends who betray their schoolmate and conspire to kill him, only to fall into their own trap. A fratricide who is racked by guilt but cannot bring himself to give up his brother's wife and his brother's kingdom. Hamlet's famous "*To be or not to be*" speech, and numerous poisonings, both purposeful and by accident, are also in this play.

Success
Henry V considers every aspect of kingship and success. "*Small time, but in that small most greatly lived/this star of England: fortune made his sword; by which the world's best garden he achieved…*" What is a king? What are the qualities that make for greatness? How many parts generosity, courage, leadership and humility? How many parts ruthlessness? What are the costs? Are not even the heaviest costs worth these great achievements?

Wealth
The Merchant of Venice concerns wealth. Every person and incident in the play seems to have something to do with money. Antonio, a merchant who has grown rich by risky ventures in trade. Shylock, a Jew who lives by lending money at interest and hoards coins and jewels at home. Shylock's daughter, who elopes, taking large amounts of his wealth with her, wasting it prodigally. There are two marriages which are made, at least partly, for money. Portia, an heiress whose father's will specifies that she be awarded to the man who guesses rightly among three treasure chests. Bassanio, a charming young man with large debts, promising, handsome, spendthrift, disingenuous, careless, who dares to ask his friend (from whom he has already borrowed money he cannot pay back), for a large and very risky loan. There is a lawsuit over a defaulted loan in which the money lender claims the right to cut a pound of flesh from the merchant's chest. The play includes much poetry concerning wealth and treasure, where it comes from, where it goes and what it means to men and women and to their relationships.

Understanding Human Experience
Such themes are the bones and muscles underneath the surface of the drama in Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare was an expert in the common fundamental laws of our nature and he plainly drew his plays from the actual structures of human experience. Shakespeare prods and pokes at reality. He throws characters, events and ideas together and makes them combine in every possible way. He shows how ambition tends to work differently in men and women. He exposes the ugliness of human greed, lust, violence, envy and betrayal.

Macbeth
Macbeth exposes what unbridled selfish ambition can do to human beings. Macbeth becomes a progressively more paranoid and isolated murderer. Lady Macbeth, who is all strength, confidence and resolve when she is provoking Macbeth to commit the initial murder, cracks under the weight of the responsibility once the deed is done. The tyrant's crimes set in motion destructive forces that will ultimately overwhelm him.

Jealousy
Othello is focused on jealousy. Othello's ensign, Iago, envious of Othello's Lieutenant Cassio, deceives Othello into murdering his faithful wife, Desdemona, by persuading Othello that she has been unfaithful with Cassio. The play revolves around the nature and effects of jealousy "*the green eyed monster which doth consume the meat it feeds on.*"

King Lear
King Lear is a profound play set in the remote past of pre-Christian Britain. King Lear abdicated his kingdom to his two daughters, Goneril and Regan, who feed his appetite for affection with extravagant and insincere and speeches. When they turn on him and reduce him to being a homeless wanderer in the wind and rain, he finds support from his third daughter, Cordelia, whom he had disinherited because of her failure to flatter like her treacherous sisters. The tragedy of King Lear centres on being deceived by insincerity and the failure of the most basic natural relationship between parent and child.

Choices
Shakespeare's tragedies show that some choices are inherently destructive. It is no wonder that Shakespeare is so shunned and slandered by many liberal professors. Shakespeare repeatedly exposes the wickedness of fornication and adultery, the importance of pre-marital virginity, the shame of unfaithfulness, and the foundational importance of Christian marriage and obeying the Laws of God.

JOHN MILTON
One of the greatest English poets, John Milton, was a dedicated Evangelical Christian. Milton was one of the most learned writers of literature. He studied for seven years at Cambridge University, and then completed six years of postgraduate studies, becoming fluent in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Italian. He knew all the great literature in each of those languages, and studied Philosophy, Theology, Maths, Music, History and Science. He travelled throughout Europe and met many of the great minds of his time. During the English Civil War Milton was a leader of the Puritan Forces fighting for Parliament. John Milton served as Secretary for Foreign Tongues under General Oliver Cromwell.

Temptation
John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. To Milton, the most important events of history were the events of the Bible. The central drama of human life was temptation. The highest form of heroism was patient resistance to temptation. Comus, a play written by Milton centres around the temptation of '*The Lady*,' a 15 year-old daughter of an earl. Comus exalts temperance and chastity as essential for our safety and happiness. We fall by giving in to temptation, but we rise by resisting it.

Personal Heroism
Despite personal tragedy in his own life, losing his sight by his mid-forties, and being disgraced and impoverished by the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II, Milton epitomised the heroic ideal by patient endurance of affliction and unjust abuse. As he wrote: "*Who best bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best…*"

Paradise Lost
The opening lines of Paradise Lost declare: "*Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste Brought death into the world, and all our woe, With loss of Eden, till one greater Man Restore us, and regain the blissful state…*"

The Degrading Doom of Disobedience
Milton's works show how obedience to God can be heroic and liberating. He exposes the ultimate folly of giving in to temptation. Milton shows that disobedience, which begins by looking so attractive, is ultimately selfish, squalid, degrading and doomed.

Paradise Regained
Just as in *Paradise Lost* he focused on the Fall of Adam and Eve, in *Paradise Regained* Milton focuses on Christ's victory over temptation in the desert, and His triumph over sin and Satan.

Freedom of Expression
Even when a key leader of the victorious parliamentary forces, John Milton championed the freedom of the press. It is a fact of history that freedom of speech and freedom of the press were not invented by the Enlightenment rationalists, but rather by the Puritan Christians of the English Protectorate.

Milton argued for a wide liberty to publish opinions, even erroneous ones! When the Puritan Parliament was triumphant over all its enemies, John Milton addressed the Members of the House to urge them to decide for free speech: "*in the midst of your victories and successes*." To Milton truth is so important that we cannot afford to miss the opportunity to learn from some piece of it that may never see the light of day under the restrictions of government censorship.

Seeking Truth
Anyone who thinks that the work of Reformation is complete, betrays that he is still very short of the whole truth. Censorship would hinder the work of truth seekers. Milton explained that it is our duty to sift through different opinions, to test them, to find what is right. "*All opinions, yea errors, learned, read and collated, are of main service and assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest*." Even "*bad books*" may be useful to the truth seeker, to the "*discreet and judicious reader*." Milton taught that even errors can be used to "*confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate*."

A Champion for Freedom
We live in a world where good and evil "*grow up together almost inseparably*" because God wants human beings to be free. "*For God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person more than the restraint of ten vicious*." As a champion of freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of the press, and as an unparalleled poet, John Milton, and his epics *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, testify against the danger of societies exiling religious Truth from the public square.

DR PETER HAMMOND

With acknowledgement to:

The Reformation Society
P.O. Box 74
Newlands
Cape Town
7725
South Africa

Sources:
The Politically Incorrect Guide to English and American Literature
by Elizabeth Kantor

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare
Hamlet by William Shakespeare
Macbeth by William Shakespeare

Paradise Lost by John Milton
Paradise Regained by John Milton

OPERATION MANNA

In April 1945, World War II was nearing its end, and a desperate situation was developing in Holland. In September 1944 Dutch transport workers went on strike to try and assist Allied forces during the Battle of Arnhem. As a result the Germans prevented the movement of food supplies in densely populated areas. During the bitter winter months of 1944/45 fuel supplies were virtually exhausted. As the Allied armies drove deep into Germany, during the Spring Holland was cut off and the majority of the Dutch people faced starvation.

In London, attempts were being made – not least by Queen Wilhelmina – to persuade Bomber Command to try and drop food supplies, but this is not an easy thing to do. Aircraft would have to fly at very low level and at slow speed to make food drops successfully. Under these conditions the bombers would make easy targets for the German anti-aircraft gunners, and there were many valid objections to any sort of a deal with the enemy.

Nevertheless, by mid-April the situation had become critical, and the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, General Eisenhower, took the step of contacting the German Commander!.... and announced on 24th April his intention of bringing relief to the Dutch people. All the necessary information regarding the flights, such as times, speeds, heights etc., were given to the German Command, but when the Delegations from both sides met formally, none of the required guarantees were forthcoming.

From the latest reports it was apparent that there could be no further delays. The Germans were warned of the consequences should they interfere either on the ground or in the air ….. and so began Operation Manna. It was on the morning of 29th April that a squadron of Lancaster bombers were called for briefing. Take off was at 11.35 hours. What none of the crews on that first flight knew was that no signed agreement had been received from the Germans. If they chose to open fire, not one Lancaster stood a chance of survival. The bombers each had about a ton of food on board, and were approaching the drop zone at a speed of only 120 knots, flying below 100 feet. No room for error. On their second flight the drop was at Rotterdam, and they literally flew up the main street, below the height of the tall buildings on either side as shelter from any German guns.

Subsequent sorties flew under the assurance that the German Command had given their word that there would be no interference with these mercy flights, but on that first flight there was no such assurance, yet as they passed over the German gunners, to their credit, they held their fire.

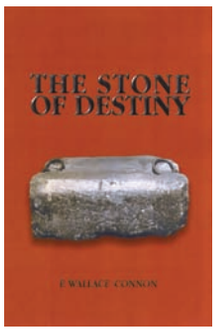
It needed a special kind of courage to fly, under those conditions to save life, rather than destroy it.

Military aircraft of course, carry the number of their squadron, and the number of that first Lancaster squadron was ….. **153**! The number of the Elect! (*John* 21:11).

JOHN BATTERSBY

Lancaster Bomber and Escort

The next time you feel like God
can't use you, just remember …
Abraham was too old, Isaac was
a daydreamer, Jacob was a liar …
Peter denied Christ, the disciples
fell asleep while praying …
and Lazarus was dead!
No more excuses now.
God can use you to your full potential.
Besides, you aren't the message,
you are just the messenger!



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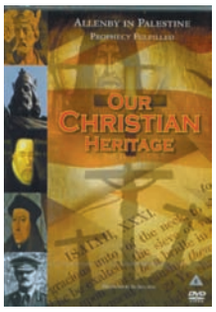

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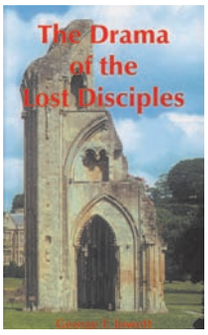

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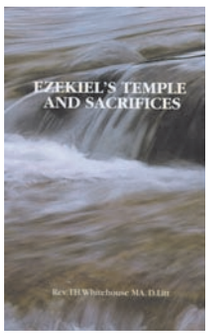

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